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Porlock



Parish Room
Old School Centre
Porlock
Somerset, TA24 8NP

Parish Council

Minutes of the Porlock Parish Council Finance & HR Committee Meeting, The Old School Centre, Tuesday 6th June 2024, 6 pm

Copies of minutes and non-confidential reports are available on request

Councillors Present: L Thornton, D Heath, D McCanlis, S McCanlis & D Thornton

Also present: Clerk Johnathan Jones

Signed:  Dated: 7/8/24

Min Ref:	Minutes	Action
FH-2024-001	Election of Chair The Clerk asked for nominations for the Chair. One nomination was received from Cllr. D McCanlis nominating Cllr. L Thornton. There were no other nominations. The Committee RESOLVED to elect Cllr. L Thornton as Finance & HR Committee Chair. PROPOSED: Cllr. D McCanlis SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL FAVOUR	
FH-2024-002	Apologies were received by the committee Cllr. S Colson	
FH-2024-003	Declarations of interest and disclosable pecuniary interest dispensations None were declared.	
FH-2024-004	Items to be dealt with after the public, including press, have been excluded The Chair advised that there would be a vote to go into closed session for Agenda item 33 due to the confidential nature of the business to be considered. It was also noted that this item may be brought forward in the agenda if time was running out due to the urgency of the matter.	
FH-2024-005	Public participation There were no members of the public present	
FH-2024-006	Post of Vice-Chair The committee consider the post of Vice-Chair for the Finance & HR Committee. The Committee RESOLVED to adopt the post of Vice-Chair for the Finance & HR Committee. PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL FAVOUR	

Initials:  Date: 7/8/24

- FH-2024-007 Election of Vice-Chair**
The Chair asked for nominations. One nomination was received from Cllr. S McCanlis for Cllr. S Colson however Cllr. S Colson was not present to accept or decline the nomination. It was also noted that it is not proper for the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council to sit as Chair or Vice Chair of a Finance Committee.
- Cllr. L Thornton nominated Cllr. D Heath.
- Council RESOLVED to elect Cllr. D Heath as the Vice-Chair.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. S McCanlis VOTING: ALL FAVOUR
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- FH-2024-008 Finance & HR Sub Committee**
The Committee RESOLVED not to have a sub committee for the Finance & HR Committee.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. S McCanlis VOTING: ALL FAVOUR
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- FH-2024-009 Minutes for the Finance Committee meeting held on 15th April '24**
Cllr. D Heath & Cllr. S McCanlis were excluded from the vote as they were not part of the previous Finance Committee. Cllr. D McCanlis raised he had some matters arising from the minutes but that would raise them at a later date as there is no agenda item for matters arising.
- Outgoing members of the Finance Committee RESOLVED to approve the minutes and were signed by the outgoing Finance Committee Chair.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- DM/JJ
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- FH-2024-010 Minutes for the HR & Staffing Committee meeting held on 8th February '24**
Outgoing members of the HR & Staffing Committee RESOLVED to approve the minutes and were signed by the outgoing HR & Staffing Committee Chair. Cllr. D McCanlis raised he had some matters arising from the minutes but that would raise them at a later date as there is no agenda item for matters arising.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. S McCanlis SECONDED: Cllr. L Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- DM/JJ
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- FH-2024-011 Old School Centre (OSC) Heating System Update**
A site system review (excluding the Visitor Centre) was undertaken of the current operation with P Fletcher Plumbing and the conclusion was that another zone is required to facilitate control from the Parish room. Further consultation is required due to the type of system. A further review will be held in the early autumn once the future needs of the OSC are known
- Clerk to arrange further review later in the year.
- JJ/DT
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- FH-2024-012 Business Risks Update**
Change of locks are still to be undertaken, however there is now a further review to be done of security changes that will be required at the end of the current tenant's lease at the end of October.
- Clerk to provide recommendation report and a quote.
- JJ

- FH-2024-013 Utility Contracts Update**
 Little progress made with reviewing current suppliers. BT is a priority as now out of contract and we are paying for services we no longer use and savings opportunity available. Another urgent priority is the water leak at Doverhay Car Park which is still not fixed awaiting date. Once fixed we can assess if resolves the high water usage. High risk to budget escalating bills. The high bill could actually be as a result of presumed estimated bill. If leak is identified underground then a rebate will be sought. Opportunity to fix electricity standard and FIT contracts to new deal. Ongoing issues with billing address with Good Energy which are being chased.
- Clerk to focus on resolving water leak provide progress update at next meeting. JJ
- Clerk to obtain quotes for new telephone & internet services. JJ
- Clerk to obtain quotes for fixed energy deals. JJ
- Update on Utility Contracts required at next Committee meeting. JJ
- FH-2024-014 Appraisals Update**
 All appraisals had been completed. Cllr. D McCanlis mentioned that he hadn't seen any of the appraisal reports. It was raised that there hadn't been an agreed process at the previous HR Committee meeting to what should happen after the appraisals had taken place.
- Clerk is to write up all appraisals and circulate to Council. JJ
- FH-2024-015 Finance & HR Committee Terms of Reference**
 Committee DEFERRED the review of the Terms of Reference until the new NALC Financial Regulations And Councils Standing Orders had been reviewed and considered by the Committee for recommendation to the Council.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- FH-2024-016 NALC Finance Regulations**
 Committee RESOLVED to review the NALC Finance Regulations outside of the committee meeting and bring a final draft version back for review and consideration by the Committee for recommendation to Council.
- FH-2024-017** PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- FH-2024-018** Cllr. Lesley Thornton will take first review based on her initial observations commentary of the new regulations. LT
- FH-2024-019** Cllr. D McCanlis will then take second review. DM
- FH-2024-020** Time frame aim is to get these adopted by Council at July Council meeting.

FH-2024-021	Delegate powers/authority Committee DEFERRED the review of the delegate powers of authority until the new NALC Financial Regulations had been reviewed and considered by the Committee for recommendation to the Council.	
	PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR	
FH-2024-022	Internal Audit 2023/24 Actions Committee RESOLVED as minuted the findings of the internal audit	
	PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR	
FH-2024-023	Ensure correct AGAR is completed prior to Council formally adopting Sections 1 and 2. This has been prepared for review by F&HR Committee item 16 for recommendation to Council.	JJ
FH-2024-024	Recommend that an Investment Policy is developed as this is a requirement for Councils with over £100k in balances. This is already on the Policy & Procedure Schedule and a draft policy is already in circulation for review by F&HR Committee.	F&HR Comm
FH-2024-025	Recommend that both Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are reviewed following the publication by NALC of revised Financial Regulations. Financial Regulations review is already underway item 13, Standing order will be reviewed following the adoption of the Financial Regulations.	F&HR Comm
FH-2024-026	Once the Financial Regulations have been reviewed and recommended for adoption a review of the Standing Orders will be undertaken.	JJ
FH-2024-027	Recommend that consideration be given to purchasing a stamp indicating boxes for receipt of invoice, Clerk and RFO approval and cost centre allocation. Clerk is preparing a payments and receipts ledger for review by Finance & HR Committee as part of the making and reporting payments review process item 17 and will incorporate the recommendation into the process.	JJ
FH-2024-028	Noted that occasionally an invoice is missing. Recommend that the procedure for obtaining and printing invoices is reviewed. The new payments and receipts ledger process will cover this.	JJ
FH-2024-029	Recommend that the burial fees be reviewed. New Cemetery Committee has been created to help manage the facility.	Cem Comm
FH-2024-030	Recommend that as the Council now has a debit card in place the petty cash account is discontinued. This recommendation follows the advice from JPAG. It was noted that the report should refer to a credit card, as in place, and not a debit card which the Council does not have. A review of the credit card process will be undertaken item 22.	F&HR Comm
FH-2024-031	Recommend that Council considers adding replacement values to the asset register so that it is aware of costs of replacement if required in future. A new asset register format from SLCC will be proposed to be adopted by Council going forward.	JJ
FH-2024-032	Clerk to seek clarity from the insurance company if insured assets are replaced old for new or not.	JJ

FH-2024-033	Recommend that the Asset Register includes additions and disposals annually. A new asset register format will cover this need.	JJ
FH-2024-034	Ensure that public notice dates are minuted again this year. The proposed Notice of Public Rights period will be - 24 th of June to the 2 nd of August '24.	JJ
FH-2024-035	AGAR, Accounting Statement and Notice of Public Rights Committee reviewed what is required in the AGAR and the Accounting Statement. Clerk to make additions regarding the asset register to the statement and to consider preparing an overview for the Council website.	JJ
FH-2024-036	Procedures for making and reporting payments Committee DEFERRED reviewing the procedure for making and reporting payments until after the review and adoption of the Finance Regulations. PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR	
FH-2024-037	Weed removal budget impact The committee discussed the implications from a budget perspective however some of these potential cost impacts could be mitigated by doing other activities less often with an aim to having a neutral impact on the budget. It was also discussed that until there was a street cleaner there would be an ongoing problem with the weeds at the kerb side as soil would continue to accumulate in the verges providing ideal growing conditions. When asking members of the village it is clear there is a divide where some don't see there is a problem and others do. It was agreed that Council is responsible for what the policy is in the village. Committee RESOLVED to get the Environment and Community Portfolio members to review the Grounds Policy and Maintenance Contract. PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR	LT/DH/S M
FH-2024-038	Clerk to ask idverde for a meeting to discuss services.	JJ
FH-2024-039	Clerk and Cllr. L Thornton to meet with Maintenance Contractor to discuss implications.	JJ/LT
FH-2024-040	Earmarked Reserves Committee RESOLVED to recommend the changes as minuted to the Earmarked reserves. PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR	
FH-2024-041	322 'SCC Climate Grant' to rename to 'Water Refill Units'.	
FH-2024-042	328 'Doverly Manor' to return funds of £20,000 to General Reserves.	

- FH-2024-043** 330 'Allot Revenue Reserve' rename to 'Treasury Stock Grants'.
- FH-2024-044** Clerk to add to future Committee meeting discussion about creating a Grants Fund.
- FH-2024-045** **Asset Register**
Committee RESOLVED that Council are to agree any additions or disposals for the Asset Register and the Clerk is responsible for keeping the register up to date based on the Council's approvals.
- FH-2024-046** The Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council to add the Apple Press in the Old School Centre Garden back onto the Asset Register as a community asset with a nominal value of £1, as per the other community assets in the village that Porlock Parish Council are custodians of.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- FH-2024-047** Clerk is to clarify if the Apple Press and the Plough are covered by Council Public Liability Insurance.
- FH-2024-048** **Banking Arrangements**
Committee DEFERRED until the next committee meeting due to time constraints.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- FH-2024-049** **Council Credit Card**
Currently there is one Credit Card through Unity supplied by Lloyds bank which is set up in Cllr. L Thornton's name as Finance Committee Chair (at the time).
- Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council setting up the Clerk with a Lloyds Bank Multi-pay credit card under the existing terms and conditions.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- FH-2024-050** Clerk to look into getting cheques envelopes from Unity as Post Office are unable to get them. JJ
- FH-2024-051** Once Council have approved the new card and it is set up, the Committee will review original card need and credit card use under the Financial Regulations. JJ
- FH-2024-052** **Investment Policy**
Committee DEFERRED until the next committee meeting due to time constraints.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR
- FH-2024-053** **Point-of-Sale**
Committee DEFERRED until the next committee meeting due to time constraints.
- PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-054 **Contactless Donations**
Committee DEFERRED until the next committee meeting due to time constraints.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Thornton VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-055 Clerk to urgently look to get cash collection facility reinstated at the Doverhay car park.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-056 **Work Station Assessment**
Committee DEFERRED until the next committee meeting due to assessments not having been carried out in time.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-057 **Website Upgrade**
Committee DEFERRED until the next committee meeting due to time constraints.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-058 **Porlock Vale Community Interest Company Service Charges 2023/24**
Committee reviewed the total utility charges report as provided by the Clerk for the OSC. It was agreed that the true costs would result in a large rise this year. It was agreed that for full transparency the Council would share the true utility cost.

Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the 2023/24 service charge for the Porlock Vale Community Interest Company will be based on 2022/23 charges with an increase of 10%.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-059 **Bright HR Contract**
Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council early termination of the Bright HR Service agreement which ends 4th May 2026 costing £1104 saving £276 as the service has never been fully utilised.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. S McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-060 **Resource Planning**
Committee DEFERRED until a future meeting due to time constraints.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-061 **Payments over £200 and under £1000**
Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council to approve the payments as minuted.

FH-2024-062 Committee DEFERRED to Council if they wanted to pay the legal fees to conduct reviews of the lease agreements on behalf of Doverly Manor Committee and if so then to consider approving payment of the quote from Thorne & Segar of £570 to conduct reviews of the lease agreements on behalf of Doverly Manor Committee.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-063 Dovers Toilet Repairs – P Fletcher Plumbing £503.00 (8,11, & 22 April)

FH-2024-064 Old School Centre step strips – Safe Tread - £269.36

FH-2024-065 High Bank car park fence repairs – J Chilcott - £560

FH-2024-066 Clerk to ensure future quotes/invoices for work include hourly rate and hours taken.

FH-2024-067 **Meeting Time Extension 19.50**
Council Resolved to extend the meeting, which it was hoped could be concluded by an additional 10 mins from 20:00 to 20:10

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-068 **Report Purchases under £200**
Committee received the report however the Clerk has verified that the purchase has yet to go through due to authoring issues with the Credit Card.

FH-2024-069 **Closed Session**
The Committee RESOLVED to go into closed session for the discussion of item 33 on this agenda as the Committee will be discussing matters that are commercially sensitive.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-070 **War Memorial at Dunster Steep Subsistence Report**
The report was received and discussed. The Committee weighed up the options available to them. It was agreed that to prevent a greater problem that the issue needs to be resolved without delay.

The committee considered the suggestion from the War Memorial Restoration Company and the quote provided. The committee also discussed the unknown of the extent of the problem.

It was suggested obtaining three quotes, however the Clerk reminded committee that this wasn't achievable when tendering for the War Memorial restoration work due to the expertise required. Financial Regulations 11.1.h state a) the Clerk/RFO shall obtain 3 quotations except in exceptional circumstances when a reason must be given in writing. Council had resolved previously based on expert advice that a specialised company was required to do the restoration work.

Cllr. D McCanlis reminded the Committee that, as this issue was within the curtilage of the War Memorial, Council had previously resolved only to use companies that dealt with War Memorial restoration. Cllr. D Heath reiterated that a vote was taken on this at Council. Cllr. D McCanlis proposed that we should use the specialist restoration company for continuity of works as they had already achieved a very good job on the restoration work. This was supported by other committee members.

It was agreed that this is a very significant and sensitive project and that the work carried out by the restoration company has already received very positive comments by the Village.

Cllr. L Thornton as Committee Chair therefore proposed to recommend to Council to accept the quote and offered to provide a report regarding the subsidence at the War Memorial at Dunster Steep.

Committee RESOLVED to recommend that the Council accept the quote of £2875.00 + VAT from the War Memorial Restoration Company and submit a report to support this recommendation.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

The Committee came out of closed session.

FH-2024-071 Finance & HR Committee meetings

Committee discussed the frequency of the meetings and agreed every other month however, due to deferred items and the need to get items to Council in July, the next Committee meeting would be held in July before Full Council. It was noted that subject to outcomes of the delegate authority/power as part of Finance Regulations Review that a further review of meeting frequency may be required.

Committee Resolved to hold the next Finance & HR Committee meeting on Tuesday 2nd July at 6pm to be held at the Old School Centre.

PROPOSED: Cllr. L Thornton SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTING: ALL IN FAVOUR

Meeting closed at 8:18pm